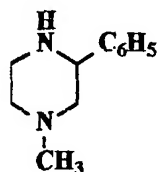


**ABSTRACT**

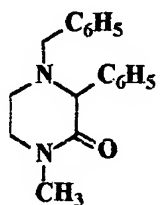
The present invention describes an industrially advantageous process to prepare highly pure 1-Methyl-3-phenylpiperazine of Formula I

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Formula I

that makes use of a novel piperazine derivative, 4-Benzyl-1-methyl-2-oxo-3-phenylpiperazine, represented by Formula II



Formula II

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1-Methyl-3-phenylpiperazine is a useful intermediate in the preparation of antidepressant Mirtazapine.